● 758

[For various therapeutic methods used in the treatment of various diseases, see Category 757.]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

844 A piece of garlic is tied with
157 cloth to each of her big toes, to prevent her from catching cold. (If
751 she gets a heavy cold, the illness is called *janni*, and the temperature of the body is below normal. Then a liquid medicine can be administered). Some five to ten minutes after the oil is given, the
846 mother is offered coffee with palm jaggery. This is given to all women after delivery.

844 4.12. The afterbirth comes a half-hour or so after the delivery, either before or after the mother has taken a bath. If it is slow in coming she will have the bath without waiting for it; although in earlier days it was customary to wait for t. Nowadays government midwives, if called in, pull the afterbirth *ex utero* if it does not immediately follow the delivery; and some others do this too.

844 Badaga women seldom go to hospital or even call a doctor
758 during child-birth. If they do so one can be sure that things
743 are very serious and often complicated. One day a Badaga woman was carried to the hospital . . . It was a case of retained placenta of three weeks duration, as the relatives told us. The woman was semi-conscious and pale with the loss of blood . . . (Ketti Medical Mission 1953:4).

657 With the increase in government programs for training midwives, such tragedies are becoming very rare. Some Badagas apparently knew of a medicine which they also provided Todas with to release a delayed placenta (Rivers 1906: 323).

844 Next, the floor where the child was born is washed with a cow-
788 dung solution. A handful of hay is lit with a brand from the fire and circled around several times over the damp spot. The burnt hay is then thrown away and the firebrand hit on the floor at that
751 point. The same place is then scratched with an adze, for it is said that if this is not done the child will get itches on the skin. (No spells are spoken; and it is not important to get the cowdung dried by the fire.)

844 The afterbirth is then carried by a woman to somewhere, generally within the hamlet boundary, where it can be buried. This can be anywhere distant from the settlement. Men may come to help
783 dig the hole, but will not touch the polluting afterbirth. It is bundled up in the dirty cloths or sacks, all of which are buried with it. A big stone and thorn bushes are put on top of the burial place, simply to make sure that no jackals or dogs eat it, for Badagas do

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

164 will neither eat nor sleep as usual. Throughout it he should always be covered with cloths, and these can only be of cotton, never wool. The covering is necessary to prevent wind from blowing on the itches. The pus in the spots would exude, but were it to be blown by wind it would go inside the body instead, causing the patient to feel very sick or even to die. The house must always remain ritually pure while someone has chicken-pox; thus men may not smoke in it, the parents must not have sexual relations, and if the patient is still an unweaned baby its mother must not lie on a bed or on matting, but must sleep on some sacks laid on the floor. During this period nobody throughout the entire hamlet may prepare any foods in oil, and oil may only be used for lamps. When women are cooking in the patient's house, he is taken to another house or at least to the outer room, since the smoke from cooking can make his infection worse. Bands of Kota and Kurumba musicians, both lower status and impure local tribes, are on no account allowed into the hamlet while chicken-pox prevails there, even though they would normally attend at Badaga weddings, funerals and certain festivals. Therefore if a person happens to die while there is chicken-pox in the hamlet the corpse will quickly be buried or cremated; but then later, when there is no longer any chicken-pox, a band of Kota musicians will come and the traditional funeral ceremonies will be observed, using a stick in place of the corpse. Of all the various taboos that come into play during chicken-pox, that against sexual relations is the most crucial, that against cooking with oil the second, and that against Kota or Kurumba music the third most important.

People suffering from this disease are given "cooling" foods to eat, and preferably no "heating" foods at all. If the patient is an unweaned infant his mother has to adopt this food restriction too. Beyond this, there is also a technique for treating chicken-pox. On the third day after some spots

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

have been found a therapist takes cold water fresh from the spring, and adds to it three pieces of Bermuda grass and three dead-nettle flowers. This water along with its contents is sprinkled thrice over the child's head and nude body. The procedure is repeated on the fifth, seventh and ninth days after the spots were noticed, but using the same number of pieces of grass and of dead-nettle as there have been days since the apparent onset of the illness. By the ninth day the child usually feels better, but "in one case out of ten" this same procedure has to be followed for the final time on the eleventh day, using 11 flowers and 11 pieces of grass.

After the final treatment the child's body is washed for the first time since the infection was recognized. The bath-water needs to be at body temperature, but if it turns out to be too hot the parent must wait for it to cool and may not on this occasion add cold water to cool it. To this particular bath some turmeric and a nim leaf are added. When the water is ready it is poured over the child's head and body, but the parents do not rub him, wash him with soap or even touch him. He is not dried with a towel, but made to sit in the house covered with a cloth while incense, turmeric and the dry outer skins of garlic and red onion are burnt together under the cloth. The child sits in this smoke for a minute or two, and only after doing so can he use woollen clothes again.

VARIOLA (*doḍḍamma*)

7.3. Probably no epidemic disease has been commoner or more feared among the Badagas than smallpox (Ouchterlony 1868: 65). In response to it they have developed a method of quarantine that certainly does much to restrict its spread.

The disease is caused by a visitation of the goddess Mariamma. To prevent her coming most Badaga villages celebrate an annual festival in her honour. At one well-known such festival at the temple site of Bokkapu:r chickens, goats and sheep

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

751
776
796
784

a dating which raises the interesting question of whether this worship was intended to soften her anger at the effectiveness of the newly-introduced "European" vaccinations (Stokes 1882: 173).

753
164

It is believed that one infected person can infect many others, and yet Badagas feel that if someone from *beyond* the hamlet has seen an infected person before a neighbour in his *own* hamlet does so, the latter person is that much safer from attack. It is as though some of the danger has been carried off. A person may be infected by smallpox at any age, and he then retires to bed, while the remainder of the population leave the hamlet altogether. Someone of the same sex as the patient, and who has already had the disease, stays to attend him. This person need not be a therapist, but is advised by a therapist. It is believed that anyone who has already had smallpox cannot transmit the disease from an infected person to someone else unless he does it by giving the patient's clothing to somebody. This is quite unlikely to happen since other villagers are not in contact with him at the time. When a patient dies, all the people looking after other smallpox patients in that hamlet help bury the corpse. While it is permissible for other men to dig the graves, they keep well away when infected corpses are brought for burial. It is believed (and perhaps justifiably) that if they were cremated, the smoke could spread the disease.

164
758
164
753
766
(753)

Smallpox gives the patient more trouble with itching than do any of the other "sister" diseases, and so he lies on big plantain leaves since these give a cool sensation. He is given a diet of nothing but "cooling" foods, with very little salt. All of the rules and prohibitions adopted during the treatment of chicken-pox also apply to the people caring for patients with smallpox: thus the house must be kept pure, men must not smoke there, sexual relations must not occur, and no oily substances may be used in cooking. Anyone, whether

758
758
784

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

758 inside the hamlet or not, if calling to a person still
784 in the hamlet must refrain from shouting to him. If it is essential to talk to someone in the hamlet a man turns his head away so that he cannot see that person. The idea underlying these various restrictions (753) seems to be that fragments of diseased skin could blow into the watery crevices or oily surfaces of the healthy body and thereby spread the disease.

757 At first smallpox is treated as a fever (6. 69), but
758 on the third day after it has been recognized as smallpox the person in attendance, under instruction from a therapist, begins the same water-sprinkling treatment described for the treatment of chicken-pox (7. 2). The water, with dead-nettle flowers and Bermuda grass in it, is sprinkled on the patient on the third, fifth, seventh and ninth days after recognition of the disease, and this continues if necessary on odd-numbered days up to the fifteenth —when 15 flowers and 15 pieces of grass are used. It is believed that no one will be afflicted with smallpox beyond the eighteenth day. As with the treatment of chicken-pox too, the patient is bathed on the last day and then made to sit under a thick cloth where he inhales smoke created by burning incense, turmeric, and the outer skins of red onions and garlic (cf. 7. 2).

164 Once a case of smallpox has been identified as
731 such, all the inhabitants of that hamlet leave and make homes for themselves in makeshift huts in their fields or perhaps some nearby jungle. But before leaving they quickly fence around their houses and workyards with thorn bushes, as a symbol of their hope that the disease might not follow them. Once in their makeshift homes they receive no visitors from elsewhere and visit no other hamlets, until the disease has disappeared entirely. At that time the hamlet's most influential men get together to decide on a day, called *u:r kuḍua jina*, when everyone will assemble and occupy their hamlet again. A

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

731
164

one bed, on which there lies a walking-stick for each dead adult, or a smaller stick for a child. In such a funeral the ritual acts and prayers are performed for each male first, and then for each female, in order of generation seniority and not of absolute age at death. If people of different phratries have died in the same hamlet then a separate bed is used for the sticks representing the members of each. Rituals are done for the superior phratry first, unless the dead members of that phratry were visitors from another hamlet. Finally, if some visitors have died there will be two separate beds for the funerals of agnates and affines within the same phratry.

[615]

164 [165] RUBELLA (*kasare*)

7.4. *Kasare*, probably identifiable with measles, kills scarcely one in a hundred of those who do not follow the restrictions, whereas smallpox kills one in two of those who ignore the treatment procedure. Nonetheless measles should not be taken lightly: as one ironic proverb puts the matter, "Measles does not harm one; the eye is ungrateful [for what it sees]." All the rules for treating smallpox should be followed, except that an infected hamlet is not deserted. The water-sprinkling treatment, begun on the third day after the disease has been recognized by its widely scattered spots, has usually cured it by the seventh day. This is followed by the customary hot bath and inhalation of smoke (7. 2).

[539]

757
758
[731]

164 PLAGUE (*ili sattara*)

7.5. Plague was not uncommon early in this century, and was known to be brought by rats (*Rattus rattus*). It is not much of a problem now however, as a medical missionary has observed:

> [Ketti] village has been harbouring the infection of plague for the last 18 months. But although there were as many as 138 rat falls reported in one week, we only know of four humans attacked. This clearly demonstrates the value of prompt preventative measures [by Government health authorities]. Owing to this incidence of plague fewer people have been coming into Ketti from

[744]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

164 CHOLERA (*ba:ndi be:di*)

7.6. Cholera is primarily an epidemic of the low country and is reportedly introduced to the Nilgiri Hills by inhabitants who visit the plains (Orton 1831: 406; Madras 1928: 63; Ketti Medical Mission 1943: 5). It is said to be caused by an evil god or goddess, and is one of the epidemics loosely labelled *na:du no:* ("countrywide illness").

Within two hours of a person's being attacked by cholera he will begin constant vomiting and diarrhoea. There is no accompanying fever; and it is by these two indications that the case is recognized as cholera. The body is now below its normal temperature and so must be given "heating" foods, generally arrack (2.6) and perhaps brandy; the patient is wrapped warmly and heated however possible. Others in the hamlet feel they have no chance to placate the deity who has brought cholera, or to stop her from coming. As soon as it is known that cholera has come everybody leaves the hamlet except for the one or two relatives who tend the patient. These people clean up after him, and are careful to keep their bodies heated along with his. Although people occasionally survive cholera, they most usually die in under two days. As soon as a person dies he is taken from the house and buried, whether it be day or night. No funeral takes place at this time, and no cremation is attempted.

When the villagers know there is no longer any case of cholera in the hamlet they stay away from it for at least a further fifteen days, since they must allow the passage of the full period of fourteen days that separates the new moon from the full, or *vice versa*. Once back home, and unlike their return following a smallpox epidemic, they can immediately receive visitors from elsewhere or go anywhere themselves.

164 MALARIA (*adurejara*)

7.7 Malaria is considered a kind of fever, and is believed to be caught by drinking the water at places on the lower Nilgiri slopes, below the usual levels of Badaga settlement (Hockings 1974 : 210).

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Their treatment for this type of fever[A] is to grind some shoots of velvety patchouli (called *kodaṇgu*), mix it with water, and make the patient swallow it. This mixture is administered first thing in the morning for three consecutive days, and then the fever will abate. (We should add that in a medical survey 8.4 per cent of a Badaga sample (N=191) were found to have sickle cells; in other words, a high level of genetic resistance to malaria; Gates 1961: 98.)

7.8 *Ka:male* is a general type of disease which has half-a-dozen varieties. One kind, jaundice, is called *manja ka: male* and is characterized by a yellowness of the body and urine. It attacks fair-complexioned people. It is treated with a juice extracted from ground-up leaves (species unknown), which the patient swallows in the early morning for three days. He is put on a diet of nothing but little millet and buttermilk, and has to avoid salt and chilies. This "cooling" diet is maintained for three days, and on the fourth he resumes his normal food. The patient should lie in a cool place. He can wash his hands, legs and face, but should not bathe during the three days. On each day the yellowness decreases provided he maintains his diet rigidly, and it will disappear by the fourth. On that day the patient takes a hot bath and is then considered cured.

HEPATITIS—JAUNDICE (*manja ka:male*)

7.9. A related disease is called *bara ka:male* and is marked by the urine turning red. It attacks dark-skinned people. This occurs because "there is too much heat in the body, which is just like baked bread." The body becomes very lean and black in complexion, for "this disease drinks all the blood." It attacks one slowly, and is usually treated by a specialist.

HEPATITIS (*bara ka: male*)

If a local therapist is uncertain whether the patient has *bara ka:male* she can administer a medicine as "first aid" before going to see the specialist. This medicine can be given for 15 to 20 days and is stopped as soon as the disease clears up. But if

A, [i.e., malaria--Analyst]

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

until they have finished all curing for that night: in fact there must be daylight before the door is unbolted. For this reason the fire must be made so that there is not too much smoke, for the houses have no chimney and windows must not be opened during the night. "No air should come inside and no air should go outside," I was told.

The only food the patient is allowed during each night of the curing is "cooling" food, given him before the cure begins. If he is a non-vegetarian he should not eat meat until he has recovered.

The therapist cleans the pounding-stone and crushes the bark on it with an iron crowbar. The other plants, apart from the strips of Indian willow bark, are then cleaned and pounded with the bark until a paste is formed. This takes an hour or more to complete. The paste is put in a pot with some water and the pounding stone and crowbar are washed with water. This water is added to the pot, which is then put on a fire and boiled continuously for half an hour.

Up to this point (in the curing of one patient, anyway) light had come from the electric lamp. Now the therapist lights all five wicks of the oil lamp; and if no such lamp is to be found in the house one is made out of cowdung, still with the five wicks. It should only burn clarified butter, but if none is in the house then groundnut or some other oil can be used instead. The patient sits in the middle of the inner room, while the therapist puts five four-anna silver coins belonging to the patient's family under the lamp. All of these coins have the head upwards—or nowadays the Ashoka Capital instead.

On the floor near where the mixture has been cooked the therapist smears some cowdung. He puts the lamp on this, with one of the coins under each wick-nozzle. The patient sits there on a sack, and is covered up with four blankets over his head so that no air can get in to him. The first blanket

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

watery medicine over the patient's body. He does not rub the body, but allows the patient to sit by the fire and dry.

It will be recalled that the therapist brought strips of bark from the Indian willow, which were not mixed into the medicine. After completing the treatment the therapist puts one of these long strips around the patient's neck, and two more—one above the elbow and one at the ankle—on the side of the body which is partially paralyzed. These strips are knotted very loosely: for it is permissible for them to fall off, provided they do so of their own accord and not because someone takes them off.

When his tongue cannot move it is because the Big Wind struck him there. The compress is then dabbed all over the body in the usual manner, but a liquid medicine is given the patient too (unless the dabbing of his body loosens his tongue). This medicine is the juice of the St. John's wort. It is obtained by slashing the bark and waiting a day or two for the juice to exude. It is then drunk diluted with a little hot water.

It is now alright for the patient to have coffee if he wants it. Then he lies down and is covered with several rugs. He is only wearing a loin-cloth, except that in a very serious case he will still be wearing the wet cloth on which the medicine has been dabbed.

The patient then sleeps. In the early morning the therapist orders the people present to clean the house and sprinkle liquid cowdung on the floor before the door is opened. Just before the cleaning starts he takes the pot of medicine upstairs and leaves it there. No women or children should go upstairs while it is there. After the purification of the house the therapist opens the door and goes out onto the yard to pray. Only after he has returned to the house are other members of the family allowed to go outside too. Before they

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

758

come out, the therapist instructs them to put a little spot of cowdung on their brows. Then all of the windows and doors are opened for half an hour or so, to let fresh air in. After this the women and children come back into the house from wherever they have been sleeping. It is alright for them to sleep on the veranda of the actual house where the curing is going on.

During the period of the cure the patient should have no sexual relations, and indulge himself in nothing impure. His diet must contain no meat or liquor whatsoever, little or no salt or chili, but extra milk and curd. He must remain at his house or in front of it, and should not go out of the village until cured. He must not go outside on the veranda or yard without having his head and body fully covered, for fresh air must not touch the body. He should not take a bath until the process of curing has been completed.

757

If the patient is not cured after five successive nights of the treatment, he will never be cured and will remain paralyzed. This failure may be because the treatment was started too late, or else because the patient did something wrong or polluting.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

that the mission hospital was of considerable value, particularly during the War years, except as a place for childbirth. Badagas and others came from villages as far as twenty miles away to seek treatment, and a number of doctor's visits were made to patients in their homes as well. "When our work was first started we were confronted by opposition in some of the villages. Now opposition has disappeared and wherever we go we are welcomed. Moreover, when a patient is very ill we are often requested by Hindu Badagas to hold the patient's hand and pray to God for his or her recovery." (Ketti Medical Mission 1940: 3). From the village where K. Sithamma was born "has come the request to open a small dispensary, the villagers offering to bear part of the cost. If the way opens we shall be glad to help...." (Ketti Medical Mission 1941: 6)

Dr Simon found that the common Badaga diseases were "pneumonia, typhoid, dysentery, hill diarrhoea, malaria, rickets, intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, anaemea, food deficiency diseases, skin diseases such as scabies, ring worm etc." (Ketti Medical Mission 1951 : 3). He also recorded a few deaths among patients due to pneumonia, diphtheria, cerebral hemorrhage, and damage during birth (Ketti Medical Mission 1934: 10; 1938: 3-4; 1951: 3). This is in contrast with the situation reported a century earlier, when the most prevalent diseases were said to be "small pox, occasionally fever, and an affection of the eyes resembling ophthalmia" (Ouchterlony 1848: 65).

The inroads of scientific medicine have been such that in 1972 the informant Sithamma told me that although she used to recommend Badaga therapy as the best, she was now recommending Western medicine and hospitals to people. In her well-informed view therapists giving traditional treatment no longer know it properly: the good therapists are dying out, while younger women are not seriously interested in studying the subject. An old therapist should not teach, but simply be observed by students, and today the young are not motivated to learn in this way. The few girls she had trained in midwifery were still calling for her help whenever they had to attend a delivery.

Knowledge of Physiology

10.12. If we are to gain some further insight into Badaga conceptions of health and medicine, we need to discover their indigenous